

THE
AUTHENTIC & INTERESTING

History

OF

MISS MORETON,

AND THE

Faithful Cottager.

—
Omnia vincit Amor.
—

IN TWO VOLUMES.

—
VOL. I.
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HISTORY
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TO inform the reader of the past
T misfortunes of my life, perhaps
may prove an arduous task, and cost
me many a sigh; the tears, no
doubt will often flow when I reflect
upon the various vicissitudes of for-
tune I have undergone. There is
not, perhaps, a more useful lesson to
mankind, than a retrospection of past
scenes; it greatly contributes to our
future happiness, and, in some

measure, appears superior to all precept. For, by the incontrovertible proof of experience we are taught to shun those snares we have formerly been entangled in, by which means we are less liable to suffer injuries, from the insidious artifices of a degenerate and corrupt world.

How sweet a satisfaction it is for the heart to be restored to itself, after a long course of wandering and disappointment; and at once settled in a calm, by the happy enjoyment of what was once the object of its desire, it yet feels, in part, some of those tremblings of horror, which leaves the imagination in remembrance of those perils and dangers it has so lately escaped from. It is true, it feels them, but only to congratulate itself on that happiness, wherewith it is now surrounded.

Those emotions intermingled with the feelings, become the most agreeable, as they, in some measure, contribute towards heightening the relish of that tranquility it at present enjoys, and fills the expanding soul with an ampler idea of what it will hereafter taste.

Such, dear reader, is my present situation ; and such, when contrasted with your own feelings, will enable you to make a more ample survey of my past misfortunes ; not doubting but you will in some measure, peruse the following pages with pleasure and delight, and receive that heart-felt satisfaction which must undoubtedly arise in the breast that despise every ignoble thought or idea, cherished by the envious and revengful part of the creation.

My father and mother were farmers, near Broomsgrove, in Worcestershire, who, by frugal industry and œconomy, had acquired an ample fortune. I was the only surviving offspring, except a son my father had by a former wife, who was the greatest object of my mother's esteem; in short, she doated on him to that excess that she was perfectly miserable whenever he happened to be out of her sight. On the other hand, I was altogether as detestable. I was unable to form any idea for such difference between a son and an only daughter: once, indeed, a few words dropped from my mother, not knowing I was near, wherein she expressed a very great aversion for female children; adding that she had often solemnly protested, both before and after marriage, she should either be

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happy in the birth of a son, or miserable in that of a daughter. She often used every endeavour to incense my father against me, and seemed entirely happy when he put on an angry countenance towards me. But he had too much good sense to be always chiding, and frequently wished my mother to make no distinction between her children; for, continued he, they are both branches of the same root by the father's side, and I respect and love them equally alike; but if there is any partiality on yours, it certainly ought to lean towards Priscilla, who is the fruit of your own body, and, as being the female, ought to merit every indulgence that is in the power of a tender and affectionate mother to bestow.

In short, my father was a man greatly esteemed by all who knew

him. His industry was such as gained him the admiration of those around him, and put it in his power to live in easy circumstances. His behaviour and manners were affable, mild, and condescending to all, the loving husband, the tender parent, and the generous and faithful friend. Temperance, both in his eating and drinking, was his chiefest aim, so that the words of the Poet are truly applicable :

- " Know all the good that individuals find,
- " Or God and Nature meant to mere mankind.
- " Reason's whole pleasure, all the joys of sense,
- " Lie in three words---health, peace, and competence;
- " But health consists with temperance alone,
- " And peace, fair virtue, peace is all thy own."

Such are the grand outlines of a character I shall always reverence and respect, and could have wished it had been in my power to have given the same encomiums on both ; but the cruelty of my mother see-

med, in some measure, stretched out towards me, which prevented my doing that justice which every dutiful child owes to them that first gave them birth.

My brother Alfred, for that was his name, was put out to a boarding-school, in the city of Worcester; my father placed me at one, some few miles distance, knowing that my mother was not fond of seeing me very often. He gave my teachers to understand, there was not the greatest harmony in the world subsisting between me and my mother; intimating, at the same time, that he should frequently take the opportunity of seeing me, whenever it suited him.

I seemed now almost in another world, no ill-natured mother to

frown upon me, no harsh expressions made use of, all was affability and good nature around me. Learning was now my chiefest aim, to attain which I was indefatigable in my pursuit, and made no inconsiderable figure in the school before I left it. I was there upwards of three years, during which time I went home but twice, and met with a very indifferent reception each time.

My brother and I often saw each other, and always agreed perfectly well. He was a sweet tempered youth, and one of the most refined manners and tenderest feelings.— How sweetly did he express himself to me one day, as we were conversing together, concerning my mother's hatred towards me. "My dearest sister, said he, how, or in what manner shall I express my

fraternal affection for you? It is true, my mother has wished me almost to blot you out of my remembrance as a sister, but natural affection forbid it. Shall I disregard my amiable and dearest Priscilla, the tender sister of my bosom, and one that I value as my own soul, merely because her mamma has taken a dislike to her, without any just cause for so doing? No, my resolution is to vindicate your cause, to the latest moment of my life; to protect your honour and your virtue whenever I see it invaded, and count myself happy in an amiable and loving sister like yourself, worthy of every good I can bestow upon you."

Judge then, reader, what must be my situation! surrounded, as it were, with love and brotherly af-

fection, expressed with so much ardency and love! “My dearest Alfred,” replied I, “it is impossible to express the joy I feel upon this occasion; the happiness that flows in upon my sinking spirits, all the thoughts of having for my friend so amiable and so good a brother; how shall I be able to make any return suitable to such an obligation under which you have now laid me? Accept, my dearest Alfred, all that is in my power to give; accept my most sanguine wishes for your welfare and happiness, that your riches may be as unbounded as your love, and whenever you approach towards the marriage state, may you meet with that fair one whose virtues and accomplishments may shine forth conspicuous as your own, and render every moment of your life a prelude to that future happiness,

which must be the sure reward of unsullied virtue and shining merit”

After this communication of my brother's affection towards me, I seemed much happier than I had heretofore been; I enjoyed a serenity of mind superior to any thing I had before experienced, and wished only for a continuance of that felicity, which at once seemed to present itself to my view.

Whenever I met with any scornful treatment from my mother, it was only unbosoming myself to Alfred, and he soon alleviated all my woe. He reasoned upon the absurdity of my mother's conduct towards me, and wished me patiently to bear the burden laid upon me, assuring me I should always find in him a loving brother and a faithful

friend. "My dear Priscilla," continued he, "strive by all means to smother your resentment; consider it as a parent you have to contend with, and although she may be very wrong in her conjectures, yet every thing on your part will be construed into the worst sense imaginable, and cause the by-standers to pronounce that worst of epithets "There goes the undutiful Miss Moreton."

These, and such-like reasonings, determined me to bear every indignity put upon me with patience, especially as I had not only a loving brother to fly to, but also a kind and indulgent father, who set the same value upon my happiness as his own. My chiefest study was how to please him, and insure that good will towards me, which he always endeavoured to shew; and I found

myself not mistaken, for one day calling upon me at school, as we walked in the garden together, he took the opportunity of informing me, that my mother was of that turn of mind which did not altogether suit his ideas; that she seemed quite out of charity with her own sex, and wished him to alter his mode of acting, even with regard to me; for that I might be made useful in many respects, without being stuck up at a boarding-school. My abilities she represented as weak and not meriting the expences I had already incurred. "But," continued my father, I know your mamma has her faults and her failings, therefore I shall not acquiesce in her measures. I am happy to see the progress you have already made in your education, and shall continue my benevolence towards you.

that you may not, in any wise, be wanting of those accomplishments requisite to adorn your own sex, and render you an amiable companion of society."

"Sir," replied I, "the obligation I owe to you is tenfold; I know my mamma never loved me, but for what reason it is out of my power to relate. I have always conducted myself as a dutiful child towards her: I have borne every think she has laid upon me with patience and resignation, not forgetting that grand maxim, 'Children, honour your parents;' being fully convinced that undutiful children bring upon themselves the wrath of God. These, and such-like thoughts, honoured Sir, croud into my mind, and convinced me, that however small and diminutive I may appear in the eye

of the world, yet there is a superior Being that weighs our inmost thoughts, and who, I trust, will not suffer the guilty to go unpunished, nor the innocent unrewarded."

I could perceive my father sensibly touched at my conversation, inso-much that he could not refrain from tears, though he wished me not to see it, and therefore, changing the discourse, asked me when I saw my brother Alfred?

"Sir," said I, "not long ago, and he certainly is a brother; indeed, I have experienced his brotherly love in many instances. Whenever I speak to him of things touching the matters we have been discoursing upon, he never fails giving me that instruction necessary to arm me against every assault, and kindly

administers that healing balm which soon allays my inward grief, and perturbation of the mind, wishing me patiently to submit to every indignity put upon me, hoping, at the same time, that my mother's hatred may one day or other change into love and affection towards me."

"Well," said my father, "I am greatly relieved in my mind. I was afraid she had incensed your brother against you, and that you never might live or converse sociably together. Alfred is a most promising youth, and shall not want for that encouragement necessary to form his mind for the reception of that extensive knowledge which seems already to shoot forth her buds."

"Continue," said he, "to cement your affections stronger and stronger

together; assist each other whenever time and opportunity offers; be assiduous, be faithful, and doubt not but that all-superintending Providence which presides over every action; will, in due time, recompence and reward your virtuous deeds. In the mean-time, my dear child, I must take my leave of you for the present, and shall pay you the earliest visit in my power; and may then, perhaps, converse with you more fully, touching some points which time, at present, will not permit."

"My father had not long been absent before my brother arrived to see me. I informed him of our conversation together. He seemed in raptures at our discourse, and assured me that nothing should be wanting, on his part, to promote

that family concord and harmony necessary to render every branch, thereof happy. "I shall," continued he, "pay a visit to my mother very shortly, and endeavour to bring about a reconciliation, if possible, betwixt you; strive to learn the chief reason, if any, of her hatred, and to soothe and soften every grievance."

Alfred waited upon my mother accordingly, and took the opportunity of reasoning with her concerning her behaviour towards me, and wishing, if possible, to sink in oblivion every ungenerous thought she might entertain in her breast. But how great was his surprize, when, instead of reasoning, he met with little else but abuse. She seemed doubly enraged at his offering to interfere in the matter, and was

sorry he should ever think of entertaining such a mean opinion of her, as to imagine she was to receive instruction from her own child. No, she was fully convinced that I should never merit the trouble he had already taken on my account; and wished him, if he valued his own happiness, to desist from any farther proceedings on that head, least he should bring upon himself the same hatred he was now attempting to release me from.

Finding every endeavour useless, he desisted from the pursuit he had in view, and took the earliest opportunity of informing me of what passed betwixt them; how her hatred seemed rather to increase than diminish; that there was very little hope left of ever coming into her

future favour ; nevertheless, he desired me not to be cast down upon the occasion, as I had a father who was tenderly fond of me.

But, alas ! my fond hopes were soon destroyed, for my dear father was suddenly taken ill, and died in the space of twenty-four hours from the time of his first indisposition.

When the unwelcome messenger arrived with the dismal tidings, I sunk, pale and motionless, upon the ground : every endeavour was used to recover me, but in vain ; nature was overwhelmed with grief, and required a length of time to re-assemble her former powers. I had lost a most indulgent parent, and had the worst of consequences to dread from my cruel mother, whom I knew would take every opportu-

nity to make my life miserable ; and so it happened ; for no sooner were my father's funeral rites performed, than she began to display her hatred towards me in a manner before unequalled.

She soon removed me from school, and insisted upon my remaining at home in the capacity of a menial servant. Unable to conform to these restrictions, it brought down upon me at once both her vengeance and hatred in a tenfold degree.

In this disagreeable situation I remained some time, unable to form any plan that might be more conducive to my present happiness. At length, I was determined upon sending a letter to my brother, hoping he might, in some measure,

assist me in my present disturbed state of mind. I had no other mode of acquainting him therewith, for as to a faithful messenger I had none, because Betty, my mother's maid, was always my avowed enemy, therefore I was destitute of any real friend to confide in. However, having procured pen, ink, and paper, I sat down and wrote the following lines:

“ Dear Brother,

“ Permit an unhappy sister to claim a few moments of your time, while I relate the disagreeable situation in which I now stand:—My mother's unkindness towards me is more than I am able to sustain. Betty is even permitted to ill-treat me, and often uses such language as I am almost ashamed to relate. Pray let me see you the first opportunity, that I may consult with you what steps are best

to be taken in my present circumstances. Adieu, and believe me your most affectionate sister,

PRISCILLA MORETON."

Shortly after the receipt of my letter, he formed a scheme of coming to see my mother, at a time she least expected him. But, indeed, his only reason for so doing was wholly on my account.

As soon as opportunity permitted, I related to him the whole particulars of every thing that had transpired during my residence at home; informing him, at the same time, that I had entertained some notion of quitting my native home, and seeking that happiness abroad which my present situation seemed to refuse me.

He appeared much affected with my discourse ; but, recovering himself a little, he entered into the following conversation: “ My dearest sister, said he, your narrative has rather surprised me. I am almost at a loss how to advise ; but, after due consideration upon the matter, and weighing all things in a balance together, must confess your reasons are very just, and, for the sake of your future happiness, cannot wish you to tarry in a place surrounded, as it were, with enemies, whose chiefest aim is that of magnifying faults to a degree before unequalled. I would have you embrace the first favourable opportunity for putting your scheme in practice, and may that Divine Providence, who always shields the virtuous and the innocent, direct your paths, and raise up friends

equal to your merit. In the meantime, be kind enough to accept of this purse, and this ring, as a lasting memento of my brotherly love and affection towards you, and shall not forget to offer up my most fervent prayers for your safety and welfare."

Then clasping me in his bosom he wept; the scene was extremely affecting and striking, far beyond the power of my pen to describe; therefore, must leave the reader to his own imagination for the rest. The night was now approaching, in which I meant, if possible, to bid a lasting farewell to the place wherein I drew my first breath. I had prepared what little things I thought necessary for my intended journey, and retired to bed at my usual time, but alas! sleep was a stranger to

me; my time was spent in thought and prayer for my future safety. My brother came secretly to me in the night, and, for the last time, wishing me to proceed for London, having an uncle, by my father's side resident therein, He married a wife, who brought him a genteel fortune, by whom he had one daughter.

My aunt was counted a good sort of a woman, and worthy of the choice she had made. There he wished me to fly, as the only place of refuge. I assured him of the reality of my intention so to do, and that he must wait with patience till some favourable opportunity offered of informing him how and in what manner my uncle and aunt received me. After a final and parting salute, my brother returned to his own room, for fear of a dis-

covery, as my mother slept in one adjoining.

The little time remaining till daylight appeared I spent in thought and meditation. "The Lord, said I, has promised, if our earthly parents forsake us, he will take us up."—These, and such-like reflections, occurred to my mind, and administered comfort in my greatest distress. I knew my brother Alfred loved me, and it was a convincing proof of the situation of those we are separated from; and where is the person that can paint the feelings of friendship, and the painful sensations of a true, noble, and generous soul, separated from those she esteems and values? This is worthy our esteem and compassion, and at once convinced me that Alfred possessed a soul of the most exalted nature. Nevertheless,

fears will croud in upon fears, and find way into the inmost recesses, and, like hungry vultures, feed upon its peace.

As day-light approached, I slipped on my things, not being equipped with any more wearing apparel than what was on my back, except a change of linen, which I put into my pocket, the rest of my things being locked up, and the key in my mother's room. My whole stock of money consisted of two guineas, one dollar, and two new shillings that Alfred gave me the day before along with the ring. I stole softly down stairs, shut the door gently after me, and, at all events, took the way for London.

How, or in what manner, my departure was afterwards discovered, I

know not, but am certain that every little noise I heard behind created more speed in me, and dare say I walked ten miles without stopping. At length, through weariness and fatigue, I sat down by the side of a little brook, and there I wept bitterly. Being still under fears, on account of my escape, dreading the apprehension of being taken worse than death itself. I recollected having a few cakes in my pocket, which I had procured the preceding evening; and being tempted by the crystal stream, I partook thereof, and was much refreshed.

Proceeding onward, I had not gone far before I was overtaken by an old gentleman, who looked earnestly at me in the face, saying, "Where are you going, my pretty

maid? why you look so melancholy to day?"

I endeavoured to make some reply, but could not articulate one syllable for several minutes. My being struck thus with terror, and in a lonely place, is not to be wondered at, especially considering my tender years. Perceiving me rather frightened, he strove to convince me that I entertained false fears; that he meant not to hurt, but to protect me, if I stood in need. And still walking by my side, and discoursing with me, I began to be less timid than before. After having asked me several questions, some of which I answered, and some not, I desired to know his reasons for being so inquisitive, and what satisfaction he received thereby? "Why, you must know, Miss, I had once"

daughter, the very image of yourself; she was the darling of my heart, and was stolen away by a gentleman, to whom I would not give my consent, and two years are now elapsed since she left my house, during which time I have not heard one syllable concerning her. I have not enjoyed a moment's peace of mind since that period: and am greatly afraid she will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

" I must own I was struck at the first sight of you, there being something particularly solid written in your countenance, which is somewhat singular at your age; therefore I took the liberty of asking a few questions, and can assure you, that during the short conversation we

have had together, I have taken a very great liking to you."

"Sir, said I, since you have thought proper to make me your confidant, may I go one step further, by enquiring if you have any more in the family than yourself?"

"Yes, replied he, I have a wife and one son, beside the daughter you heard me make mention of."

"I thank you Sir, for your information, and pity your case in the loss of your daughter, but hope you will one day have the satisfaction of seeing her again, when she will, no doubt, make you happy in a tenfold degree, in compensation for all the uneasiness she has caused you. But, I think, Sir, it is impossible to form any idea of

the real cause of her absence, since it may proceed from various causes. She may be altogether in as great anxiety of mind as yourself, yet destitute of any proper channel whereby to convey to you the least information."

"Ah! said the good old gentleman, Miss, you reason perfectly well upon the subject, but believe me (and here he fetched a deep sigh) could I but see her once more, then should I die in peace, and freely forgive her every fault she has committed. And now my dear, said he, for such I shall make free to call you, as I condescended to give you some account of my family, I hope in return you will do me the favour of communicating to me the same with regard to your's, and in the mean-time I shall be all attention."

Accordingly I related to him my little history, and he paid the greatest attention imaginable; the narrative of which I perceived affected him very much.

He gave me a kind invitation to his house, which he said was about one mile and a half distant from the great road. It was a little lonely Cottage, but most pleasantly situated, and well adapted for solitude and retirement. I accepted the kind invitation and followed the old gentleman to the rural sport he had before described.

“Here, said he, we can contemplate upon the discourse which passed between us upon the road; it will prove some recreation to you likewise, before you proceed any farther on your intended journey.”

After a little more chat together, we arrived at the Cottage of Content (for so it was called). He presented me to his wife and son; the good lady received me with the greatest politeness imaginable, and seemed as much struck with me as her husband was when he saw me upon the road. "I protest, said she, I absolutely thought it had been my daughter; she is the express image of her in almost every degree."—The old gentlemen informed her how he first saw me, and also of our conversation by the way, &c. Without any farther ceremony, she ordered dinner to be served up, for, continued she, the young lady seems faint with walking so far: in the mean-time she intreated me to take a glass of wine and a cake, which I did. A short time after-

wards dinner was brought upon the table, of which I partook with a good appetite, and seemed greatly refreshed after my fatigue. Our entertainment was plain and neat as possible, accompanied with that simplicity and good nature which render society amiable and happy. After dinner, they begged me to relate my name and family, which I did, telling them my name was Priscilla Moreton.

“ Pray, says the good lady, was not your grandfather a Clergyman once in the city of Bristol? I answered in the affirmative. “ Yes, continued she, I knew him perfectly well, and an exceeding good kind of a gentleman he was ; his character bore the strictest scrutiny ; he was a faithful pastor to his parishioners, a true friend to the poor, and well

respected by all who had the happiness of his acquaintance.

“ I am sorry for you, Miss Moreton, and can sympathize with you in your present troubles; for it is a most sad thing to be obliged to fly from home immediately after the death of so good a father; and all thro’ the ill usage of a mother, whose chiefest care ought to consist in providing for a child like yourself, who appears to me a person worthy of all the care which is in her power to bestow.” Indeed she reasoned like a mother in every respect; had I received the same kind and benevolent treatment at home, I might have lived happy and comfortable, without being obliged to quit the place of my nativity, or seeking that friendship amongst strangers, which was denied me in my father’s house.

“ Madam, said I, I never can entertain any idea of returning back again ; my heart is too full of grief with the ill usage I have already received.” I would have proceeded farther, but tears prevented me ; which Mrs. Grenville perceiving, (for that was her name) dropped the discourse, and intreated me to take a walk in the garden, by way of recreation : I excepted the invitation, and found it a most delightful spot. There was an elegant and extensive grotto, a beautiful alcove, situated by the side of a little rivulet, bordering on a wood, the trees of which inclining over the seat, formed at once a most delightful bower. Here we sat down, by way of a resting-place, and heard the little feathered songsters tune forth their melodious notes ; it was an innocent harmony, and worthy our attention.

I almost fancied myself in an imaginary paradise: I was in raptures at the delightful scene.

Our next visit was to see the little vineyard, which was beautiful to the eye, and pleasing to the taste. Here, likewise, we seated ourselves in a beautiful alcove, where clustering grapes hung pedant over our heads; around us, sweet banks of roses, umbrell'd over with spreading myrtles. The scene was beautiful to behold; here nature seemed to lavish all her stores.

You might view, from the same spot, the little wanton lambkins skipping and playing about in the adjacent meadows, while the tender mother view them with a watchful eye: this was rural felicity indeed! and free from every adulteration.—

Here were delicious fruits of every kind, pleasing both to taste and smell; vegetables of all sorts, and in great abundance. Alas! said I to myself, if I may draw the metaphor, this appears to me something like the Israelites of old, when quitting the land of Egypt, and coming into the land of Promise; a land flowing with milk and honey. Here all is peace, innocence, and tranquility. a most delightful spot indeed, where all the graces meet, and pleasure waits upon their steps! love and harmony go hand in hand! truth and justice meet each other, and seemed to form, at once, one grand and noble structure, where both the prince and the peasant might seem delighted.

No foreign wars abroad, nor inbred jars at home, to intervene and

annoy their festivity ; no envy, no distrust to disturb their tranquil breasts, in the enjoyment of these ever blissful seats ! No, all is harmony and love, without any alloy whatever.—The pen of the ready writer is too faint to describe half the various sweets nature has vouchsafed to lavish on this happy place, which justly may be styled the Cottage of Content.

“ Alas ! said I, the hand of Providence has conducted me to this happy mansion, and here for ever could I dwell, and sweetly enjoy the fruits thereof ; but my intended journey forbids it, and I must think of quitting a most delightful, rural spot, for the noise and bustle of the metropolis, where corroding care makes way, and even enters into the breast of the great and powerful.”

They expressed their kindness to me in a thousand different ways, beseeching me to make it my home as long as I thought proper. I returned my most grateful thanks, which was all I had in my power, at that time, to bestow.

They, however, seemed well pleased with my company, and when I made mention of my departure, I could perceive a gloominess upon every countenance around me, and must confess I never spent my days more happy; the only thing I dreaded was the shortness of its duration. I spent my time chiefly in the garden I have already described. Perceiving my inclination for those rural walks and shady bowers, they seldom failed to accompany me therein, and the young gentleman frequently amused us

by reading such books as were most conducive to our present entertainment.

Thus our time seemed agreeably spent, and nothing was wanting, on their parts, to render my stay as happy and agreeable as possible.— One day Mr. Grenville gave me a short history of his life, which was as follows :

“ When I arrived at my thirteenth year, (my father dying) I was then left to the care of my mother ; and in such circumstances as seemed at once to prelude and disappoint all hopes of my future education. My father was a free liver, and at one time possessed an estate of eight hundred per annum, which, by his misconduct in life, and the

card-table together, was reduced to one: this had such an effect on him as proved his death; after which my mother neither enjoyed health or happiness, and was under the necessity of quitting an elegant house in Grosvenor Square, which they had enjoyed for a course of years. and obliged to retire to an apartment she had taken for her future residence, and likewise parting with her plate and jewels, and part of her best furniture, to pay some private debts my father had contracted. It almost proved too much for her spirits; yet notwithstanding this sudden change of affairs, we did not immediately lose all our rank; we were still visited by some of the polite world: some indeed gratified their pride, by assuming an appearance of pity, and rather insulted, than alleviated our distresses; and

by way of comforting us, drew a comparison of what we were once, and what we were now ; of what we once possessed, and what we had lost ; always concluding with some sentence or other, very unpleasant and grating to the ear. Others there certainly were who acted a different part, and were often sending us some kind present or other, accompanied with a short but reviving epistle, to comfort and alleviate my mother under her present troubles. Thus, by our frugality and œconomy, we were enabled to live decently, and keep company with our superiors, without being reduced to a level with the lower class of people, which is often attended with disrespect and insult.

“ My mother now solicited the favour of a French gentleman of her

acquaintance to take me upon reasonable terms, for the farther accomplishments of my education, he being considered an excellent master of languages. He immediately acquiesced, and I was to go to France in the first ship that sailed. My dear parent and I could not bear the idea of parting from each other ; indeed she was a most affectionate mother, and she has often confessed I was a very dutiful son, and worthy all her care.

“ The captain she had agreed with for my passage sent word he should sail the next morning, which he accordingly did. The time at length arrived, when we were to take a farewell of each other, and an affecting one it was ; we intermingled our tears with each other, and as mutually embraced ; but alas ! little did I think it was the last time that

ever I was to enjoy her blessed conversation in this world. She informed me that she intended shortly to come and settle at Calais, which discourse seemed rather a great enlivener to my drooping spirits, and caused me to undertake the journey with more alacrity than I otherwise should have done. But to make short of my history, we set sail; my mother watched the ship as far as could be perceived by the naked eye, and waved her handkerchief in the air, in token of her best wishes for our safety.

“ We had a tolerable fair wind, and soon arrived at Calais, where I was kindly received by my tutor, who was a person of great affability and kindness, and shewed me many marks of it in several respects, with-

ing me not to be uneasy on account of my separation from my native country, and my dearest friends; for he hoped the progress I should make in my education would fully compensate me for all the difficulties I had encountered, and that I might one day have the pleasure of revisiting my native clime, greatly improved in every branch of useful knowledge and education.

“ I returned him a thousand thanks for his care over me, informing him I should count his instructions my chiefest care, and strive, if possible, to make that progress in my learning he already seemed so anxious to obtain.

“ I now took the earliest opportunity of writing to my dear parent, who I knew was shedding tears

ever since my departure. I informed her how happily I was situated, and only wanted her near me to complete the whole.

“ She returned me a most affectionate letter by the first packet that failed ; was exceeding glad to hear how agreeably I was situated, and concluded with giving me hopes that I might one day expect to see her in France ; where, if she liked the country, she would have no objection to settle in it for a few years until I had fully completed my education.

“ We thus continued writing alternately to each other, for the space of about one year and three weeks, when I received a letter containing the melancholy news of my mother's illness, which was of that na-

ture as to render her life despaired of, that she desired to see me, if possible, before she died. For which purpose I embraced the opportunity of coming in the first ship that sailed for England; but, owing to contrary winds, could not arrive soon enough to attend her funeral, which gave me great uneasiness and trouble of mind.

“ I was informed that she departed this life very much resigned to the will of Providence, often repeating her desire of wishing to see me once more in this life; but Almighty wisdom did not acquiesce. I found she had bequeathed to me her last blessing, together with all that she possessed.

“ This was a very severe trial to me, and could truly say with her,

I was bereft of every earthly comfort.

“ There were, indeed, some that pretended to friendship, but it was merely outside show, destitute of that reality which constitutes the real friend, as the poet elsewhere expresses it.

*“ When thou art rich thou many friends
wilt find,*

*“ If riches fail, friends soon will prove
unkind.”*

“ Of this stamp I had then a cousin, who was a merchant in the city of London. Having none else to apply to in my present situation, I kindly solicited his advice what steps were best to be taken in my present situation: had money matters been my request, I should not have been surprised at receiving a negative

answer ; but only intreating him to favour me with his best counsel, I was rather startled at the reply he made me, which was, that he thought by this time I had been able to judge for myself, and thought I had quite a sufficiency left me, if I made a proper use of it, and did not wish to spend it like a madman, as my farther had done before me.

“ I have well remembered the time when he thought it no disgrace to visit my father, any partake of the dainties of his table ; but as my father was no more, his friendship withered away also, like the unnatural Ostrich forgetting the younger branches of her family, and, like her, leaves the eggs to be hatched by the heat of the sun.

“ But to return to my story. “ I hope, continued he, you are not in

the borrowing line, for I can assure you business at present runs counter to my wishes, otherwise, perhaps, I might not see you in want of any thing in my power to assist you in."

"Sir, replied I, that was not my intention; nevertheless, had you even come to me upon that score, I do not think I should have denied your request, so far as my small stock would have admitted.

"Pray cousin, said he, take a glass of wine with me, and let us be sociable together, and if I can be any way serviceable, you may command me." I being young, and a mere novice in the art of flattery, began to imagine him sincere in his profession.

“ I have, continued he, suffered great losses in trade, and notwithstanding my extensive line of business, find if I could procure a friend to lend me about five hundred pounds, it would free me from some difficulties under which I now labour.”—“ Sir, replied I, the sum you mentioned is not immediately in my power to produce, but I have a property that will furnish me with almost double that sum, therefore shall dispose of it as soon as possible, and assist you to the utmost of my power.”

“ He appeared pleased with my proposal, and, in return for my kindness, promised to take me into his compting-house, and instruct me how to manage my own affairs and property in the world, when-

ever it suited me to change my present situation.

“ I was well satisfied with his offer, and immediately disposed of all my effects, which produced me the sum of nine hundred pounds, five of which I lent to my cousin, and the remaining four I put into the stocks.

“ The first two years he behaved tolerable well to me, but afterwards treated me with great disrespect, frequently upbraided me with my father's misconduct, in order to create words between us, which I perceiving strove by every means to shun. Sometimes, indeed, I was almost determined of quitting his house, and fixing myself in some other way of business; but he suddenly changed the manner of

his behaviour towards me, which in some measure altered my former resolution; but I soon perceived from what source his good nature sprang; it was done with a view to borrow my remaining four hundred, which I had in the stocks; but, upon a second consideration, I thought it most prudent to desist: this irritated him so much, that I had no peace afterwards, during the time I staid with him: indeed, I took the most prudent step, for about three years afterward he became a bankrupt, and paid half-a-crown in the pound. I entered into partnership with a gentleman of the same profession, and my cousin went to live at Southampton, and I never heard of him since.

“ After being in business about two years, I fell in love with a most

amiable lady, to whom I paid my addreses, and being kindly received, we shortly commenced matrimony. We lived happily together for the space of one year and about three months, when a most melancholy circumstance took place. I happened to be from home at the time, when the most sad news was brought to me that my wife had suddenly dropped down dead. I must confess that the surprise had such an effect on me, that I stood motionless for some time, my blood seemed to run cold within my veins, and bore witness of my inward grief: as soon as I was able, I repaired to the fatal spot where the sad catastrophe happened, to drop a friendly tear over the remains of that once dearly-beloved partner of my life.

“ I paid every respect due to so amiable a character, and lived in a very retired manner for some time afterward. She had a handsome fortune settled upon her, which, for want of issue, devolved upon me at her death.

“ Being tired with my present mode of life, I was determined upon quitting business and the metropolis, and find out some rural recess, where I might spend my days in contemplating the vanities of life. After some time spent in this part of the country, I had the happiness to become acquainted with my present partner, and thinking her possessed of those qualities sufficient to make the marriage state happy, I made no delay in accomplishing the grand design. This rural spot, you now

he before you, was then upon sale; I had the good fortune to purchase it: here we have resided for these twenty-six years past, and hope never to part from it, till death shall put a period to my existence.

“ We have had one son and one daughter, as I before observed to you. I am happy in my son, he is a most promising youth. I designed him for the church, and gave him a suitable education, but his inclination prompted him to go to sea; I coincided in the measures he proposed: he has been several voyages, the last of which was to the East Indies, and as he seems inclinable to tarry at home, I am in hopes of seeing him married to some amiable young lady, before I go hence, and am no more seen.—

As to my daughter, as I have before related, she has acted diametrically opposite to our wishes; nevertheless it would be some satisfaction to here she was living, but much more so, would she return a true penitent, then might we finish our days in peace, and enjoy that comfort, which, during her absence, the world cannot give.

“Thus, Miss Moreton, have I given you a short sketch of my life, hoping I have not intruded too much upon your patience.”

“Sir, replied I, your narrative has been very interesting, and could spend hour after hour, in listening to the various vicissitudes of fortune you have undergone. Heaven you see, Sir, has witnessed your patience under every trial, and at length has

fixed you in this happy rural spot, which is justly called the Cottage of Content, as a token that she has greater blessings to bestow upon those individuals who make religion and virtue their principal study."

"Indeed, Miss Moreton, said Mr. Grenville, you are young, but serious, and seem, in some degree, fitted to undergo those trials with patience, which every part of the human creation is more or less subject to.

"You have just now entered upon life, as it were, and the beginning seems rough and uncooth, but do not be disheartened; perhaps the latter end may turn out far better than the beginning. I cannot help shedding tears, when I think of the ill usage you have experienced from

your own mother, and how patient'y you have submitted to every indignity put upon you, and be assured that your patient sufferings will one day meet with satiable reward."

Indeed, Mr. Grenville's discourse was always so penetrating and sympathetic as to draw tears from my eyes, which the young gentleman perceiving, found means to change the discourse. He was every way condescending, and agreeable in his temper; a pleasing countenance, and majestic air; polite, without affectation. In short, he was possessed of those incomparable abilities which rendered him the compleat gentleman.

We drank tea in one of the shady bowers, after which we proposed

taken a walk through the adjacent wood, where the little choristers of the grove seemed to welcome us with their tuneful notes. We had a little dog with us, who had by some means or other caught a small bird, and came running with it in his mouth to Mrs. Grenville; she soon released it, and not being much hurt, soon mounted upon a spray, and, in return for the kind favour she had done him, sung a most delightful song, as if to thank us for our care.

During this rural walk, I took the occasion of expressing my warmest gratitude for the unbounded favours they had so liberally bestowed upon me, during my residence at their rural habitation; intimating a desire of pursuing my intended journey the next morning, hoping the

favour of corresponding with them by letters might not be disagreeable, whenever it was in my power to inform them how and in what manner I was provided for; and think it a duty, as well as a pleasure, to communicate to them every occurrence that transpired during my residence in town.

“ Yes, said Mrs. Grenville, whenever you quit this mansion, be sure to communicate to us every thing that happens on your arrival in town; whether they receive you kindly or not; whether they seem to wish your continuance there: if not, take the first opportunity of returning to our little cottage, where you will be received with open arms. But I have one more favour to beg of you, that is, to give us the plea-

sure of your company one week longer."

I accepted the invitation, and perceived that young Mr. Grenville seemed very much pleased upon the occasion: however, we every day took our rural walks as before, and Mr. and Mrs. Grenville frequently accompanied us in our excursions, and where partakers of our mirth. It happened, however, one day as I sat alone in a shady bower, amusing myself with reading, that I suddenly heard somebody coming down the back walk, and, upon a nearer view, perceived it was young Grenville. Seeing me alone, he addressed me thus: "Pray, Miss, let me be a partaker with you of your happiness. If the intrusion is not too great, may I beg the favour of knowing what subject you are now upon?"

“ Sir, replied I, it is Young’s Night Thoughts, and being rather seriously inclined, thought it was suitable at this time.”—“ Miss, returned he, I am sorry to interrupt your studies;” then slipping a letter into my hands, immediately retired, without saying another syllable. It was as follows :

“ *My dear Miss Mereton,*

“ It is in vain to conceal my passion any longer ; the regard I have always entertained for you, since your arrival at this rural cot, now breaks forth in spite of every effort to the contrary. In short, to speak in plain terms, my pen is too faint to declare how much I admire you. I trust our sentiments are pretty well known to each other, since I have had the pleasure of your acquaintance.—I cannot let slip the

favourable opportunity which now offers of tendering my warmest wishes for your happiness: your image is too deeply impressed on my mind ever to be erased: the thoughts of your departure hence would soon deprive me of existence; I only wait in anxious expectation of a favourable answer, and am, with all due respect, your's, &c.

“ *Theodore Grenville.*”

It is almost impossible to conceive the consternation I was in, upon the receipt of this unexpected letter; it certainly was very kind and affectionate, but the sudden surprize it threw me in, rendered me, for some short time, very faint and low; at length, recovering myself a little, I perused it a second time, and took the opportunity to indite the following answer:

“ *Sir,*

“ I acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter: the compliments you are pleased to confer upon me, far exceed my merit. The task you impose is of such magnitude, as to require my most serious deliberation: I confess, as a friend, I entertain a very great esteem for you, and am persuaded your parents, consent might easily be obtained; but cannot, by any means, approve of a precipitate marriage; not that I have the least reason to suppose your behaviour would be such as would ever cause me to repent.

“ Yet, upon second consideration, that might not be your case, especially when you come to reflect upon my present forlorn situation, having no fortune to depend upon at present, and perhaps never may;

and, oftentimes, unequal marriages end in uneasiness and discontent: therefore, Sir, would wish you to re-consider the matter, probably your thoughts may take a different turn, and fix upon some more worthy object, equal to your rank and fortune.

“ I am in duty bound to acknowledge the obligations I am under, both to yourself and family, who have each of you contributed towards my happiness, and hope a proper sense of those kind favours will never be erased from the mind of,

Sir,

Your affectionate

And grateful friend,

“ *Priscilla Moreton.*”

I never saw him any more till tea-time, which we partook of in one

of the shady bowers, as usual: I was amusing myself with reading, some short time before we drank tea, and young Mr. Grenville, perceiving me alone, was advancing towards me with great speed; but, his mamma coming into the garden also, prevented him from having any private conversation, concerning our former negotiation. After tea, we fixed upon an agreeable evening's walk, with which young Grenville seemed very well pleased, and was rather impatient with waiting so long over our tea-table chat.

The old gentleman was desirous of bearing us company, and begged we might fix upon the most rural walk, where we might enjoy the pleasures of the cooling evening's breeze.

Accordingly, we pursued our evening's recreation, and a most delightful one it was; the rural walks abounded with every thing in great variety, and so laid out by nature, that one would have imagined they had been the greatest works of art. Sometimes overlooking the fleecy flocks playing in the vallies below; sometimes walking underneath some shady bower, where the little songsters entertained us with their sweet and most melodious notes: here every thing appeared in that splendour and order, which at once proclaimed their great Creator's praise. Oh! most delightful and celestial spot! whither could I have gone to have found thy equal! If our first parents had been favoured with half those innocent pleasures and natural beauties, which now presents themselves

to our view. how is it possible they could have been seduced by that foul spirit, who appeared in so odious and so serpentine a form.

While thus reflecting and admiring these beauteous scenes of nature, young Grenville walked silently by my side; at length, perceiving me wrapped up in thought, as it were, took the opportunity of speaking to me. Mr. and Mrs. Grenville were at some little distance, viewing the ripening corn, that gently waved with the western breeze.

“ My dear Miss Moreton, said he, you have been exceedingly kind in favouring me with an answer to my letter; but why should you endeavour to couch it in such terms as to leave me between hope and

despair? why not be more explicit and more satisfactory? why should you wish to lessen yourself in the eyes of one that is unable to form words sufficient to sound your praise? I must confess when I heard you mention going to London, and of quitting this rural spot, that sorrow and grief overwhelmed me. I struggled with my passions several days, previous to my sending you those few lines, but found myself inadequate to the task; the difficulties were too great to be surmounted, my very soul was on fire, and must have consumed me to ashes had I not declared my passion, and addressed myself to the object who is able to perform a cure, and I trust I have not sued in vain. Oh! Heaven forbid the thought! No, my dear Miss Moreton, I will not entertain it, it is not worthy a

place in my bosom. Let me cast off all distrust at once, throw myself at your feet, and crave that pity and that love which is out of the power of a character, like yourself, adorn with honour, virtue, and integrity, to deny.

“ Speak, then, but speak peace to my soul; revive my drooping, sinking spirits, and remember that the greatest ambition I have in view is, to persuade you to join hands with me, and become Mrs. Grenville. Ah! poor insignificant title, I wish I had far greater to bestow; but, since it cannot be otherwise, condescend, out of pure pity and love, to accept a generous and faithful heart, a heart that always glows at the very sound of its dear Priscilla. Oh! then, despise not my petition; lend, for once, an attentive ear; re-

store me to myself; forgive my boldness; nay, sign at once a general pardon, receive me into your favour, and say, live, my Grenville.

“ I admire your sincerity, and if the reward you crave can make you happy, then take to your arms your ever faithful Priscilla Moreton.”

During the forgoing conversation, we met a gentleman and lady, who, like ourselves, came out by way of an evening's walk, and seeing Mr. and Mrs. Grenville, a long conversation took place between them. It was at length agreed to return back to the Cottage of Content. “ But probably, said Mr. Grenville, these young people may choose to pursue their evening's walk a little farther; and as they have plenty of time upon their

hands, they may use their own pleasure in so doing."

Theodore was desirous of prolonging our excursion, upon which we separated for the present;—after which he took the opportunity of renewing our former discourse, and seemed impatient for a reply;—therefore, with some little hesitation, I began as follows :

" Sir, the encomiums you have already bestowed upon me' far exceed the bounds prescribed by reason and truth. My accomplishments are but small and contracted, nevertheless when reason takes the helm, the smallest spark of oeconomy reflects a bright and shining light. Without flattery, I may say there is not that person living to whom I would give my hand

sooner than yourself; but I trust, Sir, in the circle of your acquaintance, there are many to be found whose shining qualities would soon eclipse those who are cast in an inferior mould. Therefore, Sir, I could wish you to re-consider every word and every thought, and, perhaps, after mature deliberation, you may repent of your hasty proposal, and say to yourself, Ah! Theodore, thou hadst once almost forgot thyself, by precipitately entering upon the marriage state with a person of inferior fortune and abilities. But finding thyself now more capable of judging in matters of such moment, shall endeavour to look out for one whose accomplishments are far superior to Miss Moreton's. Likewise, Sir, by taken the step you have now proposed, might be the cause of your worthy parents

hatred towards me, and one animosity begets another, till such times that they, who are now the best friends, might sooner become the greatest enemies.

“ Pardon me, Sir, if I have exaggerate ; I mean not to offend, I only reason superficially perhaps ; and sometimes women’s reasons will not bear so nice an investigation. I wish it was in my power to make you happy, but am fearful that my finite abilities are incompetent to the task, and could wish the amiable Mr. Grenville a partner far superior to myself, and better calculated for that purpose, as my intention is bent upon visiting the metropolis shortly. I hope, Sir, you will think no more of what has already passed, and then your honoured parents shall never be ac-

quainted with one single syllable that has transpired."

After this declaration of my sentiments he looked pensive and sad, his countenance seemed to change, and I began to be rather alarmed, fearing he might faint away, and none but myself near him. I procured him a little water from a purling brook, which he drank of, and, recovering himself a little, spoke in the following manner :

" My dear Priscilla, forbear to treat me any longer as a person whose affections are every moment upon the change, and whose inward feelings are not to be regarded ; but rather look upon me as your admirer, as one whose life and happiness depend either upon your smiles

or your frowns; in your power at this time are the issues of life and death. Only say, I love you, and will condescend to make you happy, and I shall live; or, on the other hand, I hate and despise you, then shall I die, and soon be forgotten."

I must confess I was exceedingly rejoiced at his recovery, but totally at a loss how to answer in so precipitate a manner, as the foregoing words seemed to require; at length, after some little pause, and a few words had interverned, on his part, to hasten my speedy answer, I addressed myself to him as follows;

"Sir, I am by no means insensible of the high regard you entertain for me, wishing it was in my power to make a suitable return; in the mean time, please to accept of that little I have to give, and

must freely confess, the great esteem I entertain for you is almost beyond description, but shall now throw off the disguise, and acknowledge myself your very faithful and loving Priscilla Moreton: it is my heart as well as my hand, you wish for, and they are both at your service; was in my power to add all the riches of Peru and Mexico, I would gladly make a sacrifice of all, and, with your honoured parents consent, I give you myself, and all my affections, and can assure you I shall never make the like sacrifice to any person, of what rank soever he may be, as I have to my dear and affectionate Mr. Grenville.

“ I shall leave the remaining part of the business for you to manage, and make known to your parents

whenever you see a convenient opportunity, and shall be miserable should it meet with their disapprobation, their kind behaviour towards me being far superior to all description. To proceed far in such weighty concerns, without their knowledge and consent, would be a base return, on my part, for all their past favours; but, my dear Grenville, only gain their approbation, mine is sure and certain."

"My dear Priscilla, returned he, you have this night saved the life of your faithful Theodore. I shall not hesitate to acquaint my mamma with the whole particulars by this time to-morrow; leaving it in her power to make what use she pleases of it with my father, and am certain, from the encomiums they have both bestowed upon you, in my

Hearing, that neither of them will have the least objection. In the meantime it will be prudent to return home, and spend the evening with the gentleman and lady who accompanied them home, taking no notice of what has transpired, till I see a proper opportunity of acquainting my mother therewith."

We excused ourselves for having stopped so long, signifying that the length of the journey had been almost too much for me. "Yes, replied Mr. Grenville, Theodore is so fond of your good company, that I rather wonder you are returned so soon; and indeed I am not at all surpris'd at it, Miss Moreton, for you are a sensible and agreeable companion, worthy of a far better person's care and attention than Theodore Grenville's."

I thanked him very kindly for his good opinion of me, assuring him that I wished no better protector than his son. We passed the remainder of the evening in mirth and good humour, and then we retired each to our separate apartments. I must confess I slept but little, therefore took the opportunity of rising early in the morning to amuse myself by walking in the garden. Having walked about in the pleasant walks and shady bowers for some length of time, I perceived Mrs. Grenville at some distance, which rather surprised me, knowing it was before her usual time of rising. She drew towards me, and with a smiling countenance said, "Miss, I saw you from my window some time ago, and having something of consequence to communicate, thought it a proper opportunity.", "Madam,

said I, I am exceedingly glad of your company, and shall be all attention."

"Why, my dear Miss Moreton, said she, I understand that Theodore has a very great affection for you, insomuch that he scarcely knows what to do, or how to act: his mind seems very much disturbed at the thoughts of your quitting this rural cottage, and, in going to London, is fearful some misfortune may happen to you by the way, and that he should be for ever robbed of his dear Priscilla Moreton. He has very strongly solicited my consent, and begs me to make intercession for him with his father. I can assure you Miss, that my consent is already obtained, and I dare say Mr. Grenville's is not far off. I shall acquaint him with the whole

affair this morning, and make no doubt but he will acquiesce. I entertain a very high opinion of you, and am well satisfied with my son's choice. If you think it no disgrace to form so near an alliance with the Grenville family, I shall be happy in the choice of you for a daughter."

"Madam, said I, the obligations I am already under are superlatively great, but this surpasses all. The honour you do me far exceeds my merit; nevertheless, shall use every endeavour on my part to render my admirer happy: no task can be too hard when sanctioned by such worthy parents as yourself and Mr. Grenville.

"I must confess that Theodore is the person of my choice, and one with whom I could be for ever hap-

py ; yet I would sooner die a thousand deaths than to wed without your joint consent. I have been fostered by your generous hand, and though a stranger, treated like a familiar friend ; and shall ingratitude, that blackest of all crimes, so far predominate over me, as to be the cause of my taking any one single step, in a matter of such importance, without the consent of my worthy benefactors ?——No, Heaven forbid the thought ! if Mr. and Mrs. Grenville are both consenting, Priscilla Moreton will be happy in the choice of her affectionate Theodore ; if not, she is in duty bound to relinquish a prize, which, of all others, to her is most valuable.”

Mrs. Grenville seemed very much affected with my discourse ; she gently squeezed me by the hand,

promising to acquaint Mr. Grenville with the particulars the first opportunity.

Accordingly, after dinner, Mr. Grenville entered upon the business, saying, “ I understand, Miss, that my son has a very great esteem for you, and as you are both here present, I must inform you, that you have my free consent, and am entirely happy in his choice; Miss Moreton’s character and behaviour are such as render her the admiration of all that have the honour of her acquaintance; her affability and kindness are such as constitute her a person every way capable of making the marriage state happy; in a word, she is amiable, she is wise, she is virtuous, and such a person as I could wish to recom-

mend as partner for life to my worthy son, Theodore Grenville.

“ And now, my dear Miss Moreton, it may not be amiss, since my son seems inclinable for matrimony, to whisper a few words in his ear; for notwithstanding he has received a liberal education, and likewise travelled over a great part of the East, yet some things may have escaped his attention; therefore a short lesson or two may not be amiss.

“ You are to understand, Theodore, that upon a minute survey of my own estate, I find myself, at this time, possessed of a clear income of about one thousand a year, and in case you commence matrimony with Miss Moreton, I shall settle four hundred per annum upon you immediately, which I hope toge-

ther with your own acquirements while abroad, will, in some measure, be sufficient to keep the wolf from the door; if I thought otherwise, I would soon add another hundred, and settle it upon my daughter, by way of pin-money, as we may expect the production of a rising offspring. I shall yet have remaining another five hundred per annum (when I and Mrs. Grenville have no more occasion for it) which will in some measure help to train up the little ones in the way they should go.

“Remember, likewise, that amongst all your youthful pleasures and amusements, you do not lose sight of religion, and then I am certain you will not forget the poor and needy. [Religion and Virtue are co-partners together, and where

the one flourishes and thrives, the other cannot possibly decay.

“ I could wish you to use œconomy ; but not to imitate the miser, who, according to sound reasoning and true philosophy, must be a most miserable being.

“ Always make a reserve of something to help a friend in adversity, and should he prove ungrateful, you will not lose your reward.

“ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and be not ashamed to follow your example.

“ I have many more things to say, when time and opportunity permit : in the mean time, I

to make yourselves happy and agreeable together; enjoy each other's company with freedom and innocence, and as Miss Moreton wishes to see her friends in London, and take their sense upon the matter, contrive to be as expeditious as possible, that, at her return, all things may be settled without delay."

"But now the grand point will be to part, I suppose, though for so short a time; but, Theodore, you must collect all your powers, you must summons the whole man, and try, for once, if there is not a possibility of parting for a few weeks, without launching out into such a multiplicity of grief and sorrow, as if you remained without hope of ever seeing each other again; and I hope Miss Moreton will likewise

act a very steady part, and, not like Theodore, weep at parting. But I cannot blame her so much, she is the weakest vessel, and every due respect ought to be paid her."

"Now, said Mrs. Grenville, you have been talking some time, Sir, if I were to put in a few words it might not be amiss: if Miss Moreton is bent upon going, I dare say she would wish Theodore's company, at least part of the way, which will be some consolation to both parties, neither shall we be witness of their sorrow; I was once young myself, and remember the time when I would have given the whole world to have been alone, that no other person might have been witness of my weakness. The cause is a natural one. Mr. Grenville, and all the

reasoning and philosophy made use of both in the ancient and modern world, is insufficient to turn aside the cause; you might by the same rule, as well suppose there was a possibility of removing the city of Rome from its present situation, and placing it upon the cupola of St. Paul's."

"Well, replied Mr. Grenville, we must sometimes yield to the fair sex, it is far better than animosity and domestic broils, which only serve other people as a gewgaw to play with, while the contending parties are eagerly seeking each others ruin. Had not Mrs. Grenville and myself strictly adhered to this maxim, we never should have inhabited this rural spot for almost thirty years, neither could it possible have been filled the Cottage of Content.

“ Domestic happiness brings down upon us blessings from above, without which all human endeavours are of little value.”

“ No, my children, for such I shall now call you, always endeavour to pursue that regular line of tranquillity, which cannot fail to render you amiable, comfortable and happy.

Mrs. Grenville seemed to acquiesce in every syllable that was spoken, and as a farther strengthener of the cause, said, “ Yes, without a mutual interest there is not, nor can be any real satisfaction; and I must now speak to the praise of Mr. Grenville, by saying, that experience soon convinced me he was the loving husband, the tender father, and the generous friend.

What retaliation could I make for such unequalled merit, and unexampled generosity, but by adding my joint endeavours likewise? and when thus cemented together, they form that noble structure, which is most properly called, domestic happiness; and herein consists your future felicity which of all others is the most durable. You frequently observe how unequally some are yoked together, and what is the end thereof, but ruin and disgrace!

“ I hope the discourse has not proved any ways disagreeable to Miss Moreton, but knowing her serious turn of mind, was my chief reason for introducing it.”

“ Indeed, Madam, said I, you have done me infinite pleasure, in condescending to give us such an

instructive lesson; it is most certainly a proof of those shining abilities, for which you are so eminently conspicuous.

“ The felicity I have enjoyed since my arrival at this blessed mansion, is unparalleled; it is adorned with every thing beautiful, both within and without! the main edifice is supported by religion and virtue, whose foundation is not to be shaken by envy, hatred, and malice; and whose beauties are not to be obliterated by devouring time.

“ I am exceedingly sorry to quit this friendly spot, even for a moment were it not for the promise I once made to my brother Alfred, of my intention to visit my Aunt at London; and who might, for ought I can tell,

already have sent to know if I was safely arrived.

“ He was a most loving indulgent brother, and merits my warmest praise. He was both my protector and counsellor, since the death of my honoured father; and has often proved the happy instrument of sheltering me from the vindictive hatred of a cruel and angry mother.

“ But here I shall draw a curtain before the scene, for the present: and, as my intended journey is fixed for to-morrow, let me crave the favor of Mr. Grenville and yourself, to accompany me as far as the main road, leaving you for a short time, though with sorrow and regret, hoping soon to return, and fully accomplish that happy and lasting union, of which

the foundation is already laid between me and your worthy, your most excellent son Theodore, whose shining abilities have taken such deep root in my heart, that loudly calls forth all my affections in his favour, from whence nothing but death can possibly separate them."

"Alas! my dear Miss Moreton, said she, the favour you solicit is but a small one, indeed; how ungrateful would it seem, to deny your request, and upon such easy terms? had they extended to a greater length, we should willingly have acquiesced, though loth to part from such a character as yours; whose entertaining company beguiles the dull hours, and causes time imperceptibly to pass away."

I returned her a thousand thanks for all past favours, hoping the day was not far off, when it might be in my power to render a more ample recompence.

“ Yes, returned she, Miss Moreton, I am truly sensible of your gratitude and good sense, even to entertain the least doubt to the contrary. Your accomplishments are such, as loudly call forth my warmest praise; neither am I in the least surpris’d that Theodore should fix his eyes upon so amiable a person, replete with every thing necessary to adorn the fair sex, and to captivate the heart of your admirer, fully convinced me, that the following lines of Swift, are truly applicable.

“ O decency, celestial maid,

“ Decend from heaven to beauty’s aid;

" Tho' beauty may beget desire,
 " 'Tis thou must fan the lover's fire;
 " To behold him in delusion still,
 " And make him fancy what you will."

" And now my dear Miss Moreton continued she, you are going a long journey, as it were, and to leave us for some length of time, and as I have never inquired into your little stock, (and perhaps never shall take that liberty while you are Miss Moreton) yet, nevertheless, be so obliging as to accept this little parting gift, (slipping ten guineas into my hand) by way of traveling expences ; hoping, ere long, to witness your safe return to the Cottage of Content. "

I was about to heap a thousand encomiums upon her, but she prevented me, by gently squeezing my hand, wished me to prepare myself

or my intended journey, by taking the benefit of a good night's repose; assuring me, I might depend on their accompanying me half of the way, where the stage would be ready, at a certain hour to convey me to London, and she knew that Theodore would go with me fifteen or twenty miles farther.

I thanked her kindly at parting, and retired to my room, meditating upon the friendship I had already experienced, and was quite at a loss how to account for it, knowing it far exceeded my real merit; yet most certainly I enjoyed that flow of happiness, in this rural Cottage, and with these few, but generous, and noble friends, that it at once drew to my mind the following soliloquy.

True happiness is of retired nature, and an enemy to pomp and noise ; it arises, in the first place, from an enjoyment of one's self, and in the next, from the friendship and conversation of a few select companions ; it loves shade and solitude, and naturally haunts groves and fountains, fields and meadows ; in short, it feels every thing it wants within itself, and receives no addition from multitudes of witnesses and spectators.

I retired to rest, but the thought of quitting this earthly paradise broke in upon, and prevented my repose ; my thoughts were wandering : sometimes resolution prompted me to pursue my journey ; at others, my whole frame seemed motionless and stupid, at the thoughts of quit-

ing my blessed abode, when on a sudden the maid servant came up to inform me breakfast was ready; I instantly obeyed the call, and found Mr. and Mrs. Grenville conversing together: Theodore was taking a serious walk in the garden, but being informed I was come down stairs, he soon came to make one of the company, and seemed exceedingly sorry at the thoughts of our approaching separation.

When breakfast was over, and all things prepared for our journey, I parted very reluctantly from this rural habitation, not forgetting frequently to turn back, like our first parents, and take another farewell view of this earthly paradise; which Mr. Grenville perceiving, took the occasion of being rather jocular upon, hoping the time might not be long

III

before I renewed my visit, and enter into that lasting friendship and alliance with the Grenville family, that might still render the Cottage of Content more pleasant and agreeable to me, than it possibly now could be.

By this time we arrived at the Inn, when, after waiting about half an hour, the stage came that was to convey me to London: there were two ladies and one gentleman, inside passengers, beside myself and Theodore, who intended to see me at least fifteen or twenty miles farther.

I took leave of Mr. and Mrs. Grenville, but not without tears on both sides, for I believe their friendship for me was unbounded: we passed the time away agreeably together, and it seemed to glide away too fast. We soon arrived at the spot

where Theodore and I must part; our stay at the inn was about half an hour, which was spent in taking leave of each other, and still cemented our friendship stronger together: tears flowed copiously on both sides, and prevented farther utterance: adieu, adieu, was all at last we had to say: Theodore returned home in a post-chaise, and I pursued my journey towards London, where I arrived about four in the afternoon.

Upon quitting the stage, I called a hackney-coach, which soon conveyed me to my uncle's, in the city. They were not so much surprised at seeing me as I expected, having received several letters from my mother, since my departure from home, acquainting them with the manner of my elopement, and wishing to

gain some intelligence concerning me, which my aunt had promised, in case I came in their way.

She seemed to treat me very kindly at first, begged I would inform her of my reason for not coming sooner, when several weeks had now elapsed since I quitted my mother's house.

I gave her a breif history of all that transpired during the interval; likewise the kind treatment I received at the Cottage; and threw out hints concerning young Grenville's paying his addresses to me; at the latter part of which she seemed rather displeased, intimating that my mother had not spoke many things in my praise, and she feared it had some truth in it, for certainly no person of

consequence would ever think it worth their while to pay any attention to such a countryfied girl as myself; and she was very sure the family I so much boasted of, were far below the account I gave of them. She imagined it might be some country youth, whom I spoke of, that was not only destitute of wealth, but likewise of manners and good breeding; and being so far distant from the metropolis, must be almost a mere natural, like myself.

But, however, as I was now come to London, she should endeavour to follow my mother's advice, and give me such instructions as seemed most likely to refine my manners, and polish my understanding: "for, continued she, child, I have a daughter far superior to yourself in every shape;

she was bred up at one of the first schools in this part of the world, and understands things perfectly well; she will read a play or romance extremely well, and is fit for any company whatever, let their situation in life be what it may: she is no stranger to the polite part of the world, and is acquainted with those of the first rank and character, and such as I shall, by degrees, introduce you to, when you have had a few more instructive lessons."

I was really thunderstruck at her discourse, delivered with so much gravity, and such an air of consequence as seemed at once to argue a great deal of self-conceit, totally unconnected with true knowledge and understanding, such as ought to render the female character both amiable and conversable. I was totally at a

loss how to answer, for fear of offending, and to acquiesce in such a jargon of incoherent sounds, would in plain terms, be stiling myself almost an idiot ; however, I took the opportunity of replying in a manner least liable of giving offence.

“ Madam, said I, most certainly you are situated in the most polite part of the kingdom, surrounded with men of learning, and the most refined manners, therefore it is not to be wondered at, if my cousin, Miss Moreton, possesses all those accomplishments you have before described and am exceedingly happy in having the opportunity of edifying myself by the example of such brilliant and shining characters.

“ As to my small stock of education I shall say but little about, my honoured father dying before I had completed it; and my mother treated me in a manner which I shall forbear to mention; yet, notwithstanding the small talent committed to my care, I have used every endeavour in my power to improve; and although I may not be so conversant in plays, novels, or romances, yet I have read sufficient to inform me, “ That the practice of virtue is so much our own interest, that we should never look upon it as a hardship, but as the foundation of honour, peace, and happiness.”

“ The Grenville family, Madam, if I may be permitted to speak, are worthy of every encomium in my power to bestow, and, although their

situation at this time is far distant from London, yet, in their juvenal days, it was the spot fixed upon for gaiety and amusement; but an overflow of pleasure soon nauseates and cloy. It was then they thought of retiring into the country, to enjoy that happiness and tranquillity which is not to be met with in the grandest cities in Europe: it is a lovely spot, and far surpasses all description.—The inhabitants are happy in themselves, and wish to make their visitors so likewise; and if ever there was an earthly paradise, it must be in that rural Cottage I have been speaking of, notwithstanding, Madam, you have represented them as awkward and uncouth beings.”

By this time my uncle had lent an attentive ear to our discourse,

and, after some short pause, said,
“ I think Mrs. Moreton, that my niece is not altogether destitute of knowledge ; and however her mother may form to herself a different opinion, yet I can certainly perceive some traces of sound learning, interwoven, as it were, with a good natural genius, which bids fair to produce a sensible and amiable woman. I shall endeavour to lend her every assistance in my power, and, if possible, strive to bring a reconciliation between her and her mother. I am very greatly afraid she accuses her wrongfully, and has taken some antipathy against her, without any real cause. She appears to me a dutiful and affectionate child, worthy of far better treatment than she has received, and shall endeavour to sift the matter to the bottom, least

too much severity should prove the ruin of so amiable and promising a character."

My aunt seemed very much disgusted at his disclosure; she by no means relished the ideas he seemed to entertain for me; the letters my mother had sent previous to my arrival had poisoned her mind, and she seemed determined, in her own breast, that my life should not be much easier in town than it had been in my native country. Indeed it resembled so much my former situation in that respect, that sometimes I almost began to imagine it was a contagion that was very catching; for however she might bring him a good fortune, yet nevertheless she seems of an arbitrary overbearing temper, seldom at peace with those around

her. My cousin, indeed, whom she had so highly praised, seemed something meeker, but fell far short of those encomiums she had lavishly bestowed upon her. I could by no means trace, throughout her conversation, that she had received those necessary instructions sufficient to constitute her a most agreeable and amiable companion; no, tho' she was not quite so overbearing as her mother in some respects, yet she was proud and insolent in others; ignorant with regard to books of morality and sound learning, and not quite sufficient to read a play, or a romance, properly: I almost began to imagine myself more than I really was.

My Uncle one day took me aside, and informed me that my brother Alfred had sent a letter of inquiry

after me, wherein he seemed to express the greatest regard for my welfare and happiness; intimating at the same time, that he could wish no notice to be taken to my mother, concerning his enquiries after me.—

“Your Aunt, continued he, is not altogether of my opinion in many points, and for the sake of peace and quietness, I sometimes seem to acquiesce; but during your stay in London, I shall be of every service in my power to you; and though your Aunt may seem a little refractory yet I would wish you to seem as if you heard it not.”

I thanked him very kindly for his care over me, assuring him that nothing should be wanting on my part, to oblige my Aunt and Cousin, notwithstanding my mother had taken

so much pains to render me despicable in their eyes: My Aunt, at that time was advancing towards us, which induced me to drop the discourse.

“ Well, said she, Priscilla, how do you seem to relish London, I hope, by this time, you begin to entertain different thoughts of the country, and the cottage, you have so much boasted of.

“ The world, continued she, is deceitful above all things, and tho’ the young gentleman you are speaking of, may make great professions outwardly, yet it may be nothing more than a trap laid to insnare you and to ruin your virtue: there is scarcely a possibility of his dealing on honourable terms with a girl like

yourself, and I could wish you to think no more of him."

"Oh! heavens forbid the thought, replied I, Madam, I could just as soon be persuaded to believe there was neither God nor Devil, as to imagine Mr. Grenville insincere."

Indeed the doctrine she advanced was sufficient to tire the patients of Job. I was several times thinking of quitting her company, but recollecting what my Uncle had before spoken to me concerning her, induced me to bear every indignity with patience.

Perceiving me rather displeased with her discourse, she began in milder terms, by saying, "You know, my dear Miss Moreton, what I have been saying is meant for

your own good, and should you refuse my counsel at this time, you might afterwards repent it as long as you live."

Immediately upon this juncture some visitors arrived; I was going to withdraw, but my Aunt insisted upon the contrary, adding, "This is Sir William Douglass, as excellent a character as the world can produce."

I was sorry to appear before company in my dishabille, but she would have no denial: arguments were vain and useless things to a person of her description. She soon introduced me to her visitants, at the same time informing them I was the daughter of the late Farmer Moreton; that I was but a country girl, it is true, and totally unacquainted

with life, being bred up in a small village, far distant from the metropolis; but she should endeavour to give me such instructive lessons, as might be the means of my future preferment.

“ Very good, Madam, replied Sir William, and I warrant she will make great improvements in a short time, especially under so good a tutorefs as yourself.”

“ Sir, replied my Uncle, my niece seems very much attached to a country life; therefore I am fearful that London may not altogether be so agreeable to her.”

“ Oh! what horrid ideas, replied Miss Douglass, I and my sister could not live, were we not to visit the play-houses and ball-rooms, par-

taking of every amusement consistent with the character of a gentlewoman."

"I am very much of your opinion, said my Aunt, Miss, and, if agreeable, we will make a party to Vauxhall to morrow evening."

"Yes, Madam, replied Sir William, I and my two daughters shall be exceedingly happy in your company."

I cannot but say, that notwithstanding they used every endeavour to divert me, yet my thoughts sometimes wandering as far as the Cottage of Content. Indeed my Aunt did not forget to speak to that purpose. "For, continued she, you look very pensive, Miss Moreton; I am afraid your thoughts are em-

ployed upon country business ;—
but when we get you to Vauxhall,
you must banish every melancholy
thought.”

The subject now turned upon
dress and fashion, each giving their
sentiments thereon. The two Miss
Douglass's seemed great advocates
for the modes of the times, and
wished to embrace every opportu-
nity of complying with the modern
taste.

“ Well, said Sir William, I must
now beg the favour of Miss Moreton
to give us her opinion upon the
matter.”

“ Sir, said I, if I must absolutely
speak the truth without reserve, I
am an advocate for that dress which
is plain and neat, nothing tawdry,

nor yet formal; and were I a lady of quality, am certain I should never comply with the mode of the day, any farther than by way of compliment to my own sex; but, as I have not a wish for preferment in life, I am regardless of any dress but that which is plain and neat, and most becoming the wearer. I am of opinion, that the rich and affluent are less happy than the simple villagers; it is they alone can command their passions, and wish for nothing more than they possess.

“ I think, replied Sir William, Miss, your ideas are very just; there are but few like yourself, who have learned to moderate their desires: it is true, those whom fortune places in an elevated sphere of life, envy the calm enjoyments and tranquil pleasures of the humble: those who

are acquainted with grandieure, only for the name, sigh incessantly for empty honours."

" Indeed, Sir, said I, should it be my lot to be fixed in the most humble situation, and could enjoy the benedictions of gratitude, I have learned therewith to be content, and should count myself much happier than the monarch who sits upon his throne, adorned with all his regal ornaments."

I begged pardon for continuing the discourse, hoping it had not been any ways disagreeable to the ladies.

" No, said Sir William, I think I can answer for them, as well as myself, in that point ; and if I must

pay you the compliment, Miss, you are very communicative, and your discourse worthy of attention."

By this time tea was served up, after which, a walk was proposed; but the two young ladies and my cousin objected to it, and seemed rather inclinable for spending the evening at home, to which we all consented. We danced together some time, when, shortly before supper came on the table, I was taken very ill, and obliged to retire to my room: they soon departed home afterwards, and seemed quite sorry that I was unable to lend them my company, hoping to find me so far recovered in the morning as to be able to accompany them to Vauxhall in the evening.

Sir William sent his servant in the morning, to inquire after my health. I begged my aunt to inform him I was something better than I was the preceeding evening ; that I could by no means think of going to Vauxhall wishing to be excused till a more convenient opportunity. I appeared to be much indisposed, and confined to my room, during which I intended writing to the Cottage of Content.

While I was contemplating myself upon these things, I heard a loud rap at the door, which I found was Sir William and his two daughters, who called to inquire after my health.— My aunt sent up the maid to know if it was agreeable for the two young ladies to spend half an hour with me ? I returned for answer, I should be glad of their company : they came

up, when, after some short stay, finding I could not attend them in the evening, they took leave, wishing me much better.

They took an opportunity of informing me that Sir William would be greatly disappointed in not having my company; in short, he wished himself ten or twenty years younger for my sake, he would most certainly think of becoming a relation of Mr. Moreton's.

I smiled at their discourse, and dismissed them with my compliments to Sir William, and was sorry I could not make one amongst them, though at the same time I was very glad of their absence.

My Aunt came soon afterwards, by way of asking me how I did ; at the same time, hinting something to me concerning Sir William ; that he spoke highly in my praise, and wished an interview as soon as convenient. “ Perhaps you may object to his age, said she, but that is of little consequence, when considering you will be a lady, both by title and fortune.”

I was struck with amazement at her discourse, and seemed for some time in a state of stupor ; at length, recovering, in some measure, my wounded spirits, I addressed her thus :

“ Pardon, dear Madam, if I dissent from you in these particulars : Sir William may, and no doubt is a very worthy character ; neverthe-

less, were he as rich as the great Mogul, he would not be the object of my choice. How degenerate should I appear in the eyes of the world, to give my hand to that person to whom I could not give my heart also! Youth and old age form too great a contrast to be mutually confined by the bonds of matrimony. Reason and nature both forbid it.—No, the faithful Cottager has gained possession of my heart, and there would I bestow my gifts; for where the souls are not united, there can be no real happiness, according to the Poet.

- “ A generous friendship no cold medium knows,
- “ Burns with one love, with one resentment glows :
- “ One should our interests and our passion be,
- “ My friend must hate the man who injures me ;
- “ Great souls by instinct to each other turn,
- “ Demand alliance, and in friendship burn.

My aunt was going to reply, but my uncle prevented her, by saying that the propofals were undoubtedly very great; nevertheless, as my youthful affections were fixed upon another object, more worthy of my choice, he would by no means wish to remove my stability; that would only be the means of making my life miserable in the extreme. Had I not been pre-engaged, and Sir William had paid his addreffes to me, the matter had been otherwise; then might ſhe have uſed every perſuaſion in her power to bring about that union which he now looked upon as neither proper nor poſſible.

My aunt, for once, in ſome meaſure gave way to my uncles diſcourſe, and made no other reply than by ſaying ſhe would leave me

to reflect coolly upon the matter ; hoping, when I had weighed every thing in the ballance of reason, it might be in my power to re-call some promises I might foolishly have made.

I did not wish to enter into any farther discourse upon the business, therefore made no reply. As soon as they withdrew, I sat down, and dictated the following lines to my faithful Theodore :

“ Sir,

“ I count it my greatest happiness in embracing the first opportunity of writing to you, knowing your anxiety would be great in not hearing from me sooner.

“ I was at first very well recieved, and hoped to meet with some small

comfort, even in a strange country ; but my hopes were soon blasted ; my aunt is the very representative of my mother, and breathes the same disagreeable language. Alas ! said I, this is one and the same thing, far different from that loving treatment I once received at the Cottage of Content.

“ My uncle is a worthy character, and possesses a noble and generous soul. My aunt would fain persuade me to marry an old gentleman turned of sixty ; he came on a visit to my uncle’s yesterday, and took the opportunity of breaking the matter open to my aunt first, that she might communicate the affair to me, which I rejected in a manner it deserved.— He has two daughters, much older than myself, and not of the finest polish.

“ The amusements of the metropolis fall far short of those in rural life, especially when divested of your entertaining company, without which, every thing soon nauseates and cloy.

“ My aunt has carried on a correspondence with my mother concerning me, ever since my departure from home, and I am fearful she may form some scheme to force me back again ; but if I were certain of it, I would soon return to your happy Cottage. I am perfectly sure I shall never meet with that object I shall esteem more than yourself, therefore you need not fear any rival. Pray for your dear Priscilla, and lay her affections at the feet of your deservedly honoured parents, whom I long to see, almost equally as yourself, and

believe me unalterably

Yours, &c.

PRISCILLA MORETON."

After finishing this epistle, I hastened with it to the post, and fearing discovery, desired the servants not to take the least notice concerning my going out, which I believe they faithfully obeyed.

I retired to bed at my usual time, though sleep was a stranger to my eyes; my mind being wholly taken up in forming some plan or other relative to my quitting my uncle's house, which was now become very disagreeable on several accounts.

I heard them return home about three in the morning, but saw none of them before eleven; about which

time they came to enquire after my health.——I informed them I was something better, having taken a little rest the preceding night, which, I hoped might prove of great utility.

My aunt as usual, began her encomiums upon Sir William's affability and obliging behaviour; wishing me to have made one in the preceding evening's entertainment, as she was very certain his generous behaviour could not have failed to render him almost the object of admiration.

“ I am happy, replied I, you found every thing agreeable to your wishes, but am certain Sir William would never have taken my fancy, had he been fifty times more humour-some than he really was; neverthe-

less, to any other person he might appear otherwise.

“ Oh! said my aunt, he is a gentleman of great abilities, and sound judgment, and though a little advanced in years, yet his ample fortune makes sufficient atonement for all; and in one word, I look upon him as greatly your superior; therefore it is highly unbecoming, Miss Moreton, in the least degree, to slight or neglect his overtures, which must, in the end, highly turn out to your advantage. And, continued she, I shall insist upon your accompanying me this evening upon a visit to Sir William’s.

“ Alas! Madam, said I, for once let me intreat you to dispence with my company, it being a task so very disagreeable to my present inclination:

neither can I be persuaded to entertain the most distant idea concerning matrimonial affairs, with such a character as Sir William, notwithstanding all his boasted rank and fortune."

"Very well, Miss, said she, if your resentment carries you so far, I shall endeavour to give you cause for repentance, and that very soon." Upon which she quitted the room abruptly.

During her absence, my mind became greatly agitated; I was persuaded in myself, that something fatal would befall me, for daring to speak the real sentiments of my mind, in a matter of such importance as that of matrimony; on the other hand, I flattered myself with the pleasing idea of quitting the town

early in the morning, and flying to the Cottage of Content, in order to baffle or disappoint any design or plot that might be formed against me. But, alas! my designs were soon frustrated; for the servant soon afterwards came up, acquainting me dinner was ready, wishing to know if I intended coming down, or whether it should be brought up, I made choice of the latter; it was accordingly brought me; it was with difficulty I partook of a little, for my mind was busied about other things.

Some time afterwards my aunt came to my room, and spoke in much cooler terms than before, hoping I would make it agreeable to go with her in the evening to Sir William's, she having pledged herself to bring me: it would seem

very odd, to forfeit her word and honour in such a case.

“ Yes Madam, replied I, I shall obey you; and if under no restraint, it will be the more agreeable.”

“ Very well, said she, then I shall send the hair-dresser to you in time, that we may be as expeditious as possible.” Soon afterwards, she sent the maid to me with a new cap, made in the highest pitch of the mode, hoping I would accept of it as a small present.

I almost began to think I was coming into favour again, and my spirits seemed something revived. The coach came at the time appointed, to convey us to Sir William's, who lived in the Kensington

Road. They expressed much happiness upon our arrival, and, after the usual compliments upon such occasions, Sir William proposed a walk in the garden till tea-time, to which we readily consented.

Immediately upon entering the garden, I cast my eyes upon one of the oddest, drollest figures of a woman that ever presented itself to my view, and am apprehensive that the description I am about to give of her, will fall infinitely short of the original.

Her face was the exact figure of a harvest moon. I was so struck with the appearance of this blazing comet, that it was some time before I could sufficiently contract my muscles to pay the small tribute of compliments due to her, as Sir William's housekeeper. Her fat car-

case was bedizened in a yellow tabby silk, a cap with wings, near a quarter of a yard deep, full trimmed with pink ribbons; a short neck, adorned with five rows of red beads, the full size of a middling bird's egg, and tied with a large bunch of ribbon, of the same flaming colour; a deep scarlet-coloured petticoat, with a short gauze apron: add to these pretty ornaments, a pair of enormous white wax ear-rings, and a pair of laced shoes.—Her name was Clutterbuck.

Sir William begged of her to turn back, and accompany the ladies, which she seemed very fond of.

In the first place she entertained us with an account of all her imaginary ailments, and counted it al-

most next to a miracle that a person in her debilitated state should be able to walk so well as she did.

We could scarcely refrain from laughing ; but, at the same time, informed her, that nothing was more conducive to her health than air and exercise.

“ This young lady, said my aunt, is just come out of the country, and informs me she has walked ten miles at a stretch, without stopping to rest by the way. Our young ladies in town would think themselves extremely fatigued in being obliged to walk one.”

“ Indeed, replied Mrs. Clutterbuck, she has the appearance of health in her countenance. I am afraid the Miss Douglasses will ne-

ver take pattern by her ; and, as for myself, good lack-a-day ! I shall never be able to waddle half a mile.—Oh ! dear, my spirits will not permit me to talk any more till I have rested myself in this alcove ; my breath is almost gone.”

I believe it was upwards of ten minutes before she was able to utter another syllable. At length, having somewhat recovered her fatigue, she began begging our pardons for being so silent ; and, by way of making us amends, would inform us of the chief news that was now going on in the neighbourhood.

“ My master, Sir William Douglass, I am informed, makes suit to a Worcestershire young lady, of unblemished character, and although

there is a disparity of age between them, yet no doubt but they will make a very happy couple."

She declared, that Sir William was possessed of every thing that could possible make a woman happy, and hoped no young lady would so far stand in her own light, as to refuse him either hand or heart.

Sir William tyanked her very kindly for her good opinion of him, but wondered where she had been to gain her information from, declaring he had not the least knowledge of any young lady from Worcestershire, accept the young lady present, and she has, I am informed, fixed her affections upon a young gentleman in the country, which I am very sorry for But pray, Mrs. Clutterbuck, since you are almost

incapable of walking, how comes it to pass that you have made shift to waddle up and down the neighbourhood, and become acquainted with those secrets to which I myself am an utter stranger?

“ Indeed, Sir, returned she, it is the chief discourse going, and a person you little think of assured me of it, as a matter of fact, but begged I would not divulge the secret, as they by no means wished to have their names brought into question.”

“ Yes, said Sir William, a pretty kind of a secret indeed, to be the talk of the whole parish, and very probably the next parish to it. But if you please, Mrs. Housekeeper, I should now esteem it a favour of

you to make tea for the young ladies, for by this time, I should imagine, they stand in need of some refreshment."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



